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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

24 August 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM :
Acting NIO for East Asia

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SUBJECT : East Asia Warning Assessment

The following items were discussed by the Community Representatives at the 19 August 1981.

Thailand

Analysts generally agreed that the recent election to parliament of former Prime Minister Kriangsak spelled potential trouble for current Prime Minister Prem, but there was no immediate challenge to Prem in the offing. Kriangsak lacks widespread support in the army and is disliked by the royal family, the two major sources of power and legitimacy in Thailand. It was nevertheless also agreed that Prem is a lackluster leader whose days are numbered. He could be removed either through a "parliamentary coup" organized by Kriangsak -- a development that would take time to be put in motion -- or a straight forward military takeover. Most analysts thought that a military move around the first of October -- the date for annual military promotions and usually a period of restiveness in the army -- was now less likely as a result of Prem's announcement of key promotions in advance.

Korea

With a single exception, analysts believed there was no connection between a North Korean overflight of an island held by the south and a subsequent firefight in the DMZ. There was general agreement both that the overflight -- the first since 1975 -- was deliberate and that reports of a

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second overflight were false. Analysts could come up with no rational explanation for a North Korean overflight but, while noting that the North Koreans had also rehearsed a landing on the island, generally doubted that an attack on this outpost was in the offing. They saw no particular significance in the fight in the DMZ and noted that no military preparations in the North could be discovered.

Analysts generally believed the recent ouster of General Pak Se Chik, formerly a close associate of President Chun, was significant but not ominous. Most analysts agreed that Pak's dismissal did not indicate that there was significant erosion of support for the President within the military or that the group of military officers (of whom Pak was one) who helped bring Chun to power was now breaking up. There was general agreement, however, that the development meant that careful examination of the possibility of discontent within the military was in order. Some analysts advanced the idea that Pak had offered certain powerful figures in the President's entourage rather than Chun himself.

China

Although it was not, strictly speaking, a warning agenda item, analysts examined briefly the circumstances of the forthcoming visit of Vice Chief of Staff Lu Huaqing to Washington to discuss arms purchases and technology transfer. There was general agreement that the Chinese had made the visit a touchstone of the state of Sino-US relations, and that if the negotiations went badly those relations could be adversely affected. There was also general agreement that some of the Chinese pressure for advance notice regarding the US position in the talks was designed to put Washington on the defensive, although genuine concern was also in evidence.

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